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Watergater in a new jam

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MIAMI—Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis, claiming he had "friends in high places" who owed him favors, promised an undercover agent to get someone out of jail in exchange for watches worth \$75,000, police said.

Officers said Sturgis, 62, and Emiljo Cotonat, 47, were taken into custody together.

Police Sgt. Tom Tretola, who led the three-week investigation, said Sturgis told the undercover policeman "he had friends in high places, people who owe me favors" who could free prisoners early.

Sturgis, who ran an electronics store in Miami until four years ago, now lists his occupation as a consultant. Cotonat, who is from Spain, said he is in marketing.

Sturgis, a former CIA employee, was among the five Watergate "plumbers" caught at the Democratic National Committee headquarters on June 17, 1972. He pleaded guilty to charges of burglary, wiretapping and conspiracy and spent 13 months in prison.

He now says he made the plea under false circumstances and is trying to reopen the case to clear his name.

In November 1973 he was convicted in Miami of transporting stolen cars to Mexico but the nine-month sentence was set aside because he helped federal narcotics agents.

Tretola said the current investigation started late last month.

Someone approached an undercover agent and said he knew two people who could reduce prison sentences for a price. The officer met with Sturgis and Cotonat, saying he was the leader of a drug and stolen property ring.

He promised them \$75,000 in Rolex watches if they could help get a fellow ring member out of jail.